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IN THE APPLICATION
OF
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AND
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FOR A
WASTEPAPER BASKETBALL BASKET

WASTEPAPER BASKETBALL BASKET

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/405,310, filed August 23, 2002.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

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The present invention relates to a wastebasket, and particularly to a wastebasket simulating the appearance of a basketball backboard and basket for attachment to a vertical support member.

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2. DESCRIPTION OF RELATED ART

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There are many toys related to basketball and to basketball games which may be used by both adults and children. These toys generally require some assembly prior to use and must be disassembled after use to avoid unnecessary clutter. However, because busy adults are less likely to invest the time to assemble and disassemble the toys on a daily basis, the toys are generally not used as often as desired. To provide busy individuals with an

opportunity to indulge in some basketball related activity on a daily basis without wasting time, it would be advantageous to provide a basketball related toy which may be used as an item typically found in a residence or work place, such as a wastepaper basket.

Wastepaper baskets in strategic locations throughout a home or facility can help to achieve an immaculate and well-kept environment. Typically, wastepaper baskets are small cylindrical structures, comprising an open-topped housing of square or round cross-section. The container can only be seen and accessed from limited locations in a room, since it is generally placed on a ground surface where taller surrounding objects may hide it from plain view. Often times, many people refrain from placing wastepaper baskets in more convenient locations because of their unattractive appearance. Once the wastepaper basket is full, it is necessary to bend down and lift the full container or trash bag inside the container upwardly. In some cases, a heavy, full container or trash bag must be lifted upwardly through a distance of four feet or more in order to clear the rim of the waste basket. This causes excessive back strain and may result in back injuries.

The related art does not disclose a basketball toy that can be used as wastepaper basket which would allow frequent, beneficial use of the toy and convenient use of the wastepaper basket.

Spanish Patent Application No. 8803550, published May 1, 1989, to R. Pau Diaz, one of the co-inventors of the present invention, describes a wastepaper basketball basket comprising a semi-cylindrical basket attached to a rectangular backboard. Unlike a conventional basketball hoop and backboard combination, the basket is moon shaped and abuts the backboard, making it difficult to successfully direct wastepaper or other articles into the basket. U.S. Patent No. 2,512,417, issued August 1, 1949 to C. Cook, describes a mounting bracket for a basketball goal which may be permanently fastened against a backboard or clipped over the top edge of a door or the like.

U.S. Patent No. 3,244,420, issued April 5, 1966 to D. Poynter, describes a miniaturized basketball backboard and hoop assembly which is adapted to be releasably attached to the upper peripheral rim of a receptacle such as a wastebasket. The backboard is disposed in upstanding relationship above the rim of a wastebasket and the net extends over the open upper portion of the waste basket. The wastebasket assembly must remain on a ground surface and requires one to bend or stoop down when disassembling the basket from the basketball backboard to empty the basket.

U.S. Patent No. 5,910,058, issued June 8, 1999 to Y. Zheng, describes a basketball game structure having a backboard with a first loop and a second loop, and a basket having a rim that is hinged to the backboard. The structure has a weight for anchoring

to a support, and a connecting piece for pivotally coupling the weight to the backboard. The structure can be folded or collapsed into a compact configuration.

Other patents relating to basketball game structures or structurally similar devices include U.S. Des. Pat. No. 309,808, issued August 7, 1990 to Phelps et al. (an ornamental design for a wall hamper); U.S. Des. Patent No. 334,958, issued April 20, 1993 to Fischer (an ornamental design for a toy basketball goal); U.S. Patent No. 451,715, issued May 5, 1891 to H. Rockhill (holders for basins that can be attached to a window sill); U.S. Patent No. 857,820, issued June 25, 1907 to W. Mosher (grain-bag holder); U.S. Patent No. 3,913,916, issued October 21, 1975 to J. Martin Jr. (basketball goal-type toy); U.S. Patent No. 3,967,819 to J. Lewis (combination container and ball goal reflector); U.S. Patent No. 5,066,006 to J. Driska (basket for basketball-like game); and U.S. Patent No. 5,762,569 to G. Hale (device for converting a container into a figure to simulate an interactive game).

None of the above inventions and patents, taken either singly or in combination, is seen to describe the instant invention as claimed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The wastepaper basketball basket comprises a cylindrical container and an upright, substantially rectangular barrier which

extends vertically from the cylindrical container. The cylindrical container has a peripheral wall which extends between a closed end and an opposing open end. An arm protrudes from the open end of the container and detachably fits into a pocket in the rectangular barrier. Preferably, the cylindrical container and barrier are shaped to resemble a basketball net and backboard respectively. The barrier is adapted to attach to a vertical support member at any desired elevation. Waste paper or other trash items may be thrown into the container in a manner similar to that in which a basketball is typically directed towards a net.

The wastepaper basketball basket may be used as a container to discard unwanted items, as well as a device for regularly indulging in a basketball-like game. Since the wastepaper basketball basket can be used as a wastebasket and does not take up floor space, it does not need constant assembly and disassembly, as do most basketball-like toys. In addition, the elevation of the wastepaper basket may allow one to direct waste paper or other articles into the basket from any position in a room. One may also empty a full basket without having to stoop down and subject the back to unnecessary strain.

Accordingly, it is a principal object of the invention to provide a wastepaper basketball basket for receiving waste paper or other unwanted items.

It is another object of the invention to provide a wastepaper basketball basket which can be attached to vertical support member at any desired elevation.

It is a further object of the invention to provide a wastepaper basketball basket whereby wastepaper and other discarded items in the basket may be discarded without requiring one to bend down and endure significant back stress.

Still another object of the invention is to provide a wastepaper basketball basket which can be used in a manner similar to a basketball hoop and backboard by throwing waste paper or other articles towards it.

It is an object of the invention to provide improved elements and arrangements thereof in an apparatus for the purposes described which is inexpensive, dependable and fully effective in accomplishing its intended purposes.

These and other objects of the present invention will become readily apparent upon further review of the following specification and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a front view of a wastepaper basketball basket according to the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a wastepaper basketball basket according to the present invention.

Fig. 3 is a side section view of the barrier drawn along lines 3-3 of Fig. 2 with the cylindrical container detached from the barrier.

Fig. 4 is a rear view of the wastepaper basketball basket according to the present invention.

Fig. 5 is an exploded, perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a wastepaper basketball basket according to the present invention.

Fig. 6 is a top view of the wastepaper basketball basket of Fig. 5.

Similar reference characters denote corresponding features consistently throughout the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The present invention relates to a wastepaper basketball basket, designated generally as 10 in the drawings. As can be seen in Fig. 1, the wastepaper basketball basket 10 comprises a generally cylindrical container 12 and an upright generally rectangular barrier 14 simulating a basketball backboard which extends vertically from the cylindrical container 12. The cylindrical container 12 is defined by a peripheral wall 17, a closed end 16 and an opposing first open end 18. A rim 19 is positioned along the periphery of the open end 18 and has a rearwardly extending arm 20 attached thereto. A fixed bottom 21,

fixedly attached to a lower edge of the peripheral wall 17, defines the closed end 16.

The barrier 14 comprises front and rear sides 30 and 32, respectively. An opening or pocket 26 (seen in Figs. 3 and 4) is provided on the front side 30 of the barrier 14. The arm 20, comprising horizontal portion 22 and angled portion 24, protrudes from the rim 19 and connects the cylindrical container 12 to the barrier 14. The horizontal portion 22 adjoins the rim 19 and prevents the cylindrical container 12 from abutting against the barrier 14, while the angled portion 24 detachably fits into the pocket 26 at the front side 30 of the barrier 14. Consequently, wastepaper or other such articles may be directed through the open end 18 either directly or upon rebound from the barrier 14.

As can be seen in Figs. 2-4, a peripheral flange 15 extends about the periphery of the barrier 14 on the rear side 32 of the barrier 14. The rear side 32 of the barrier 14 may have hooks 28 near the top edges of the barrier 14, apertures at each corner for receiving screws or nails mounted on a vertical support surface, or may be otherwise adapted in any suitable manner for mounting on a vertical support surface. Preferably, two hooks 28 are attached near the top edges of the barrier 14, as can be seen in Fig. 4, for engaging an overhanging member such as a screw or nail that projects from a vertical support surface.

An alternative embodiment of the wastepaper basketball basket, generally designated as 11, is illustrated in Figs. 5-6.

As shown in Fig. 5, the wastepaper basketball basket 11 is identical to the wastepaper basketball basket 10 except that the cylindrical container 12 includes a ledge 34 that extends from a lower edge of the peripheral wall 17, as well as a detachable bottom 36 which can be detachably positioned upon the ledge 34 to define the closed end 16. Three flexible tabs 40 are disposed at varying positions about the periphery of the detachable bottom 36. When the detachable bottom 36 is detachably positioned upon the ledge 34, the tabs 40 abut the peripheral wall 17 of the cylindrical container 12, as is shown in Fig. 6. Consequently, when the wastepaper basket ball basket 11 is overturned, the tabs 40 prevent the detachable bottom 36 from falling out. The detachable bottom 36 can be removed from its position on the ledge 34 by pushing the detachable bottom 36 through the first open end 18. When the detachable bottom 36 is removed, the wastepaper basketball basket 11 more closely simulates a real basketball hoop having two opposing open ends through which a ball or other appropriate item may be thrown

The wastepaper basketball basket 10 can be made from a thermoplastic material, fiberglass, or any other suitable material. Preferably, the cylindrical container 12 and barrier 14 are shaped to resemble a basketball net and backboard respectively. Accordingly, the barrier 14 and cylindrical container 12 may be decorated to provide the illusion of a conventional basketball net and backboard. The cylindrical

container 12 may also have apertures defined therein to further suggest the appearance of a conventional basketball net.

It is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to the sole embodiment described above, but encompasses any and all embodiments within the scope of the following claims.

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